IN THE CLAIMS

1-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously presented) A method comprising:

receiving node information for a node coupled to a computer network;

analyzing the received node information to identify a unique identifier;

selecting at least a security identified provided by an operating system of the node for the unique identifier when the analysis indicates that the node information includes the security identifier;

selecting at least a serial number provided by a basic input output system of the node for the unique identifier when the analysis indicates that the node information does not include the security identifier;

selecting at least a physical address for the unique identifier when the analysis indicates that the node information does not include either of the security identifier and the serial number;

determining whether to issue an alarm indicating a network intrusion responsive to receiving the node information by comparing the unique identifier to a database;

automatically linking at least a portion of said node information to an existing database entry in the database and not issuing the alarm when the comparison indicates a tracked entity that corresponds to the node; and

issuing the alarm indicating the network intrusion and creating a new database entry when the comparison indicates that the node is a new entity.

5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 4, wherein the unique identifier is not based solely on an Internet Protocol (IP) address such that the determination of whether the alarm is sent is independent of whether the node is subject to static or dynamic address assignment.

6. (Previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the unique identifier is a combination of the physical address and a network address for the node.

7. (Previously presented) The method of claim 4, wherein the unique identifier includes a domain name associated with the node, a computer name associated with the node and one other value associated with the node.

8. (Prcviously presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the other value is a security identifier, a serial number or the physical address.

9. (Previously presented) A method comprising:

receiving node information for a node coupled to a computer network;

selecting from the received node information a security identifier for use in a unique identifier when the security identifier is available, and when the security identifier is not available, selecting a substitute value for use in the unique idcntifier, the substitute value being at least one value selected from the group of a serial number, a physical address and another statically assigned value;

determining whether to issue an alarm indicating a network intrusion responsive to receiving the node information by comparing the unique identifier to a database;

automatically linking at least a portion of said node information to an existing database entry in the databasc and not issuing the alarm when the comparison indicates a tracked entity that corresponds to the node; and

issuing the alarm indicating the network intrusion and creating a new database entry when the comparison indicates that the node is a new entity.

10. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the unique identifier is a combination of the physical address and a network address for the node.

11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein said tracked entity is a user of said computcr network.

12. (Prcviously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein said tracked entity is a computer system.

13. (Currcntly amended) An apparatus comprising:

one or more processors; and

a memory coupled to the processors comprising instructions executable by the processors, the processors operable when executing the instructions to:

receive node information for a node coupled to a computer network;

select from the received node information a security identifier for use in a unique identifier when the security identifier is available, and when the security identifier is not available, select a substitute value for use in the unique identifier, the substitute value being at least one value selected from the group of a serial number, a physical address and another statically assigned value;

determine whether to issue an alarm indicating a network intrusion responsive to receiving the node information by comparing the unique identifier to a database;

automatically link at least a portion of said node information to an existing database entry in the database and not issuing the alarm if the comparison indicates a tracked entity that corresponds to the node; and

issue the alarm indicating the network intrusion and create a new database entry if the comparison indicates that the node is a new entity.

~~analyze identifiers included in the received node information to select a value for comparing to a database that lists tracked entities;~~

~~determining whether the node corresponds to one of the tracked entities by comparing the selected value to the database;~~

~~when the node corresponds to one of the tracked entities, linking at least a portion of the received node information to an existing entry in the database; and~~

~~when the node does not correspond to one of the tracked entities, adding an entry for a new entity to the database and linking the node information to the new entry.~~

14. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the unique identifier ~~selected value~~ is not based solely on an Internet Protocol (IP) address such that the node can be correlated to one of the tracked entities even when the node is subject to dynamic IP address assignment.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the substitute ~~selected~~ value is based on the [[a]] physical address for the node when the [[a]] serial number is unavailable.

17. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the substitute ~~selected~~ value is based on the [[a]] physical address for the node when a different preferred identifier is unavailable.

18. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the substitute ~~selected~~ value is based on both the [[a]] physical address and a network address for the node when a different preferred identifier is unavailable.

19. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the unique identifier ~~selected value~~ is a combination of a [[the]] network address for the node and a globally unique identifier.

20. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the unique identifier ~~selected value~~ is not based solely on an IPv4 address such that the node can be correlated to one of the tracked entities even when the node is subject to dynamic IPv4 address assignment.

21. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the processors are further operable to:

select either a security identifier provided by an operating system of the node ~~or a serial number provided by a basic input output system of the node for the value~~ if ~~when~~ the received node information includes ~~either~~ the operating system provided security identifier ~~or the serial number~~; and

select the substitute value if ~~a physical address for the value when~~ the received node information does not include ~~either~~ the operating system provided security identifier ~~or the serial number~~.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein issuance of a false alarm is avoided when the received node information is linked to an existing entry in the database.

24. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the processors are further operable to use adaptive scanning before determining whether to issue the [[an]] alarm.

25. (Currently amended) A system, comprising:

means for receiving node information related to a node on said computer network;

means for selecting from the received node information a security identifier for use in a unique identifier when the security identifier is available, and if the security identifier is not available, selecting a substitute value for use in the unique identifier, the substitute value being at least one value selected from the group of a serial number, a physical address and another statically assigned value;

means for determining whether to issue an alarm indicating a network intrusion responsive to receiving the node information by comparing the unique identifier to a database;

means for linking at least a portion of said node information to an existing database entry in the database and not issuing the alarm if the comparison indicates a tracked entity that corresponds to the node; and

means for issuing the alarm indicating the network intrusion and creating a new database entry if the comparison indicates that the node is a new entity.

~~means for analyzing the received node information to located a unique identifier that is able to uniquely identify an entity associated with the node, the unique identifier being a value other than a network address for the node;~~

~~means for determining if a database entry exists by searching said database using multiple identifiers from said node information that are not able to individually uniquely identify said entity, if said node information does not include said unique identifier;~~

~~means for linking at least a portion of said node information to said entry if said entry exists; and~~

~~means for creating a new entry in said database for said entity if no entry exists for said entity, and linking at least the portion of said node information to said new entry.~~

26. (Cancelled)

27. (Currently amended) The system of claim 26, wherein said unique identifier is based on ~~multiple identifiers further comprise~~ a computer name.

28. (Currently amended) The system of Claim 27, wherein said unique identifier is based on ~~multiple identifiers further comprise~~ a domain name.

29. (Currently amended) The system of Claim 28, wherein said unique identifier is based on ~~multiple identifiers further comprise~~ an operating system identifier.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Cancelled)

32. (Currently amended) The system of Claim 25, wherein said ~~unique identifier comprises a~~ serial number is associated with a Basic Input Output System for the node.

33. (Previously presented) The system of claim 25, further comprising:

means for returning an identifier for an entity in response to a request including a node identifier.

34. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 25, further comprising:

means for returning identifiers for all nodes associated with an entity in response to a request including an entity identifier.

35. (Previously presented) The system of Claim 25, further comprising:

means for returning node information in response to a request for said node information including a node identifier.

36-45. (cancelled)